

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A battery pack for a wireless communication device comprising:
a housing adapted to be removably attachable to a wireless communication
device, the housing including an external shell defining an optical port therethrough
and having an operational power interface and a data interface disposed on an
exterior surface thereof;

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at least one battery disposed within the housing and electrically connected
to the operational power interface; and
an optical reader disposed within the housing for scanning an optical indicia
through the optical port and producing signals indicative of information encoded in
the optical indicia, the optical reader being operably connected to the data
interface;

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whereby a wireless communication device attached to the battery pack
can obtain operational power from the operational power interface and can access
signals indicative of the information encoded in the optical indicia from the data
interface.

2. A battery pack in accordance with claim 1, wherein the optical reader
further comprises:

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a radiant energy source for generating a radiant energy for illuminating the
optical indicia;

a photodetector for generating output electrical signals indicative of the
radiant energy incident thereon;

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an optical system for directing the radiant energy from the radiant energy
source through the optical port to the optical indicia, collecting the radiant energy
reflected from the optical indicia to the optical port, and directing the collected
radiant energy to the photodetector; and

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a decoder for decoding the output electrical signals of the photodetector and producing the signals indicative of the information encoded in the indicia.

3. A battery pack in accordance with claim 2, wherein the radiant energy source produces light having a wavelength within the visible spectrum.

4. A battery pack in accordance with claim 2, wherein the radiant energy source produces light having a wavelength within the infrared (IR) spectrum.

5. A battery pack in accordance with claim 2, wherein the radiant energy source produces light having a wavelength shorter than visible light and longer than X-rays.

5 6. A battery pack in accordance with claim 1, further comprising battery conditioning circuitry disposed within the housing and having a first electrical connection to the battery and a second electrical connection to the data interface, the battery conditioning circuitry monitoring operational battery characteristics through the first electrical connection and producing signals indicative of the charge condition of the battery on the second electrical connection, whereby a wireless communication device connected to the battery pack can access signals indicative of the operational battery characteristics on the data interface.

5 7. A battery pack in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:
a memory disposed within the housing and having a first code stored therein, the first code being associated with a group attribute of the battery pack;
and
5 a processor disposed within the housing and operably connected to the memory and to the data interface;

wherein the processor can access the memory, retrieve the first code, and provide signals indicative of the first code at the data interface.

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15 A battery pack in accordance with claim 1, wherein the housing is adapted for attachment to a wireless communication device which is a personal digital assistant (PDA).

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16. A method for accessing a remote location on a computer network, comprising the following steps:

scanning an optical indicia with an optical reader disposed within a battery pack removably attached to a wireless communication device to extract
5 information encoded in the optical indicia;

transmitting signals indicative of the information encoded in the optical indicia from the battery pack to the wireless communication device;

transmitting signals indicative of information encoded in the optical indicia from the wireless communication device to the computer network to obtain routing
10 information for a remote location on the network; and

accessing a remote location on the computer network using the routing information.

17. A method in accordance with claim 16, wherein the step of scanning further comprises:

illuminating the optical indicia with radiant energy from a radiant energy source disposed within the battery pack;

5 collecting the radiant energy reflected from the optical indicia and routing the radiant energy to a photodetector disposed within the battery pack which produces electrical signals indicative of the radiant energy incident thereupon;

decoding the electrical signals produced by the photodetector to produce signals indicative of information encoded in the optical indicia.

18. A method in accordance with claim 16, wherein the step of transmitting signals indicative of the information encoded in the optical indicia from the battery pack to the wireless communication device comprises:

assembling data including signals indicative of information encoded in the
5 optical indicia; and

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sending the assembled data to a data interface disposed on the exterior surface of the battery pack

19. A method in accordance with claim 18, wherein the step of assembling data further comprises:

accessing a memory disposed within the battery pack; and

retrieving a first code stored in the memory, the first code being associated

5 with a group attribute of the battery pack.

20. A method in accordance with claim 19, wherein the group attribute associated with the first code is an identification of the distributor of the battery pack.

21. A method in accordance with claim 19, wherein the group attribute associated with the first code is an identification of the model of the battery pack.

22. A method in accordance with claim 19, wherein the step of assembling a data package further comprises:

accessing the memory; and

retrieving a second code stored in the memory, the second code being

5 associated with an individual attribute of the battery pack.

23. A method in accordance with claim 22, wherein individual attribute associated with the second code is a serial number of the battery pack.

24. A method in accordance with claim 22, wherein the individual attribute associated with the second code is an identification of the user of the battery pack.

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25. A method in accordance with claim 16, wherein the step of transmitting signals indicative of information encoded in the optical indicia from the wireless communication device to the computer network further comprises:

5 transmitting radio frequency signals indicative of information encoded in the optical indicia from the wireless communication device to a network interface disposed on the computer network;
converting the radio frequency signals to network-compatible signals indicative of information encoded in the optical indicia in the network interface; and
10 transmitting the network-compatible signals from the network interface onto the computer network.

26. A method in accordance with claim 16, wherein the step of accessing a remote location on the computer network further comprises:

5 transmitting signals indicative of information encoded in the optical indicia received from the wireless communication device to an intermediate location on the computer network;

accessing a database at the intermediate location, the database including a first plurality of routing information for locations on the computer network and a second plurality of information encoded in optical indicia and associating each of the first plurality with at least one of the second plurality; and
10 retrieving from the database the routing information associated with the information encoded in the optical indicia received from the wireless communication device.

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27. A method in accordance with claim 26, wherein the step of accessing a remote location on the computer network further comprises:

transmitting signals indicative of a first code from the wireless communication device to the intermediate location on the computer network, the first code being associated with a group attribute of the battery pack;

accessing the database at the intermediate location, the database including a third plurality of first codes and associating each of the first plurality of routing information for locations on the computer network with at least one of the second plurality of information encoded in optical indicia and one of the third plurality; and

retrieving from the database the routing information associated with the information encoded in the optical indicia and the first code received from the wireless communication device.

28. A method in accordance with claim 26, wherein the step of accessing a remote location on the computer network further comprises:

transmitting signals indicative of a second code from the wireless communication device to the intermediate location on the computer network, the second first code being associated with an individual attribute of the battery pack;

accessing the database at the intermediate location, the database including a fourth plurality of first codes and associating each of the first plurality of routing information for locations on the computer network with at least one of the second plurality of information encoded in optical indicia and one of the fourth plurality; and

retrieving from the database the routing information associated with the information encoded in the optical indicia and the second code received from the wireless communication device.

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29. A method in accordance with claim 26, wherein the step of retrieving from the database further comprises returning routing information from the database to the wireless communication device.

30. A method in accordance with claim 16, wherein the step of accessing a remote location on the computer network further comprises:

connecting the wireless communication device to remote location using the routing information; and

5 retrieving information from the remote location for display on wireless communication device.

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31. A system for accessing a remote location on a computer network,
comprising:

a wireless communication device;

a battery pack removably attached to the wireless communication device

for providing operational power to the wireless communication device and
including therewithin an optical reader adapted to scan an optical indica, extract
information encoded in the optical indicia and provide signals indicative of the
encoded information to the wireless communication device;

a network interface disposed on the computer network for receiving radio
frequency (RF) signals from the wireless communication device indicative of the
encoded information and converting the RF signals into network signals indicative
of the encoded information which are compatible with the computer network; and

a computer database including a first plurality of routing information for
locations on the computer network and a second plurality of information encoded
in optical indicia and associating each of the first plurality with at least one of the
second plurality;

whereby the computer database can be accessed to retrieve the routing
information associated with the encoded information indicated by the network
signals, and the wireless communication device can access a remote location on
the computer network using the routing information.

32. A system in accordance with claim 31, wherein the wireless
communication device is a cellular telephone.

33. A system in accordance with claim 31, wherein the wireless
communication device is a handheld PC.

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34. A system in accordance with claim 31, wherein the wireless communication device is a personal digital assistant (PDA).

35. A system in accordance with claim 31, wherein the computer database is disposed at an intermediate location on the computer network.

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comprising:

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a cellular telephone;

a removable battery pack including

a housing adapted to be removably attachable to the

cellular telephone, the housing including an external shell defining

an optical port therethrough and having an operational power

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interface and a data interface disposed on an exterior surface

thereof;

at least one battery disposed within the housing and

electrically connected to the operational power interface; and

an optical reader disposed within the housing for scanning

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an optical indicia through the optical port and producing signals

indicative of information encoded in the optical indicia, the optical

reader being operably connected to the data interface;

whereby the cellular telephone receives operational power from the

operational power interface of the battery pack and receives signals indicative of

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the information encoded in the optical indicia from the data interface of the battery pack; and

whereby the cellular telephone accesses a remote location on the network using the information encoded in the optical indicia.

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comprising:

A device for accessing a remote location on a computer network

a personal digital assistant (PDA);

a removable battery pack including

a housing adapted to be removably attachable to the PDA,

the housing including an external shell defining an optical port

therethrough and having an operational power interface and a data interface disposed on an exterior surface thereof;

at least one battery disposed within the housing and

electrically connected to the operational power interface; and

an optical reader disposed within the housing for scanning an optical indicia through the optical port and producing signals indicative of information encoded in the optical indicia, the optical reader being operably connected to the data interface;

whereby the PDA receives operational power from the operational power interface of the battery pack and receives signals indicative of the information encoded in the optical indicia from the data interface of the battery pack; and

whereby the PDA accesses a remote location on the network using the information encoded in the optical indicia.

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